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Gender Stereotypes in Fantasy Fairy Tales: Cinderella

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Abstract
This paper explores gender stereotypes and culture depicted in three different versions of Cinderella children textbooks. The researcher has limited the study of fairy tales to *Cinderella,* the western version that she grew up reading it, and two other eastern versions: *The Egyptian Cinderella* and *The Korean Cinderella*. The characteristics of all versions represent different ethnics and cultural backgrounds. Findings that are based on discourse analysis show that the criteria of beauty and stereotype vary among all of the three versions of Cinderella children textbooks. That variation is based on the perspective of the culture represented in each one of the stories. Some valuable educational implications to limit the stereotypical gender misconceptions in children literature are presented to both parents and teachers.

***Key words*:** children books; children literature; fairy tales; fantasy; gender; stereotypes

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1. Introduction

Literature plays a very important role in the maturity of our knowledge and understanding of life. It is mostly a reflection of our societies. Many scholars, such as Botelho and Rudman (2009), agree that gender, race, class and many other ideologies are implicitly and explicitly represented in many of children's literature and more precisely in fantasy fairy tales. Thus, they may negatively contribute in the creation of our children's values and attitudes and impact their viewpoints of the real life. Therefore, some educators have criticized many of the fairy tales for their negative influences on children. They have explicitly portrayed stereotypical concepts about women such as being passive, beautiful, week, sexy and dependent or cruel, tough, selfish and jealous …etc. For instance, Ms. Lurie (1970) points out that many of the European fairy tales misrepresent women. She claims that such stories only "reflect the taste of the refined literary men who edit the first popular collections of fairy tales during the Victorian era" (as cited in Lieberman 1972, p. 383). Furthermore, Lieberman (1972) criticizes fairy tales for perpetuating women as "passive, submissive and helpless" (p.387). It is very rare when fairy tale stories portray women as active and non-passive. However, in this study, the author will highlight few points that contradict the above generalizations.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The author has chosen to limit the study of fairy tales to *Cinderella,* the western version that she grew up reading it, and two other eastern versions. They are *The Egyptian Cinderella* and *The Korean Cinderella*. The characteristics of all the versions represent different ethnics and cultures. Even though, there is an estimation of more than one thousand existing versions of Cinderella tales, the criteria of beauty vary among some of them (Botelho& Rudman, 2009, p. 225). That is why the author has specifically selected these three versions of Cinderella. Additionally, the author chose the fairy tale *Cinderella* story in particular because:

- It is one of the adults and children's very well known stories,
- It has various versions of different cultures,
- Different versions of the story are available in the English language,
- The researcher is curious to reveal some possible gender stereotypes depicted in the three different cultural versions of *Cinderella,* and,
- The author aims at sharing some valuable educational implications to avoid or at least, to limit the stereotypical gender misconceptions. Furthermore, regardless of its popularity, this tale in particular, has been criticized in many previous research studies.

1.2 What is a Stereotype?

Peterson (2004) defines stereotype as "a negative statement made a bout a group of people" (p. 26). In other words, it means applying specific generalization to an entire group of people. This paper aims at revealing the gender stereotypes that are depicted in three children's picture textbooks. These textbooks are McClintock's *Cinderella*, Climo's*The Egyptian Cinderella* and Climo's*The Korean Cinderella*. There is an agreement among many educators about the idea that gender stereotypes and the underestimation of females in children's textbooks can have a great negative influence on children's behaviors and beliefs. Such influences might lead children to create false generalizations about the roles of both males and females. Killen, Lee-kim, McGlothlin and Stranger (2002) claim, "In the area of gender, stereotypes have been viewed as the shared beliefs about the typical characteristics of males and females" (p. 19). In

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fact, they have found in a research on stereotype that children start to think about stereotyped knowledge even before they start school. Unfortunately, gender stereotypes can be a reflection of our cultures' true values.

Historically, regardless of the biological gender differences between males and females, Biklen and Pollard (1993) have claimed that there was a sort of disagreement about the females' nature. There was a debate about whether women's nurture abilities are better to be found within families at home or to be competent to men's jobs and careers outdoors. Gender differences can also be seen among young and adults in classrooms, at work and sometimes among the members of the same family. For instance, in education, Sadkers (1990) is surprised of how teachers of elementary and secondary schools focus more on interacting with boys more than they do with girls. They listen, reward, criticize and counsel boys more than they do with girls. They relate this kind of interaction to ethnic and racial related issues. They also note that minority males and females are the least to interact with teachers than the mainstream males and females.

In work fields, Biklen& Pollard (1993, p. 96), claim that women with academic degree are less likely to be employed and if they are employed, their allowances are always less than the men. This is the case even if males and females are occupying similar jobs. Furthermore, Sarland (1991) supports Rowbotham argument and relates this marginalization to "*gender code"* (p. 48) that associates the relations between females and houses and males and outdoor careers. Nevertheless, throughout time women started to gain a social status, develop self-identity and became self-dependent rather than relaying on males in providing and proving themselves.

Therefore, the author, as a mother and as an educator, believes that it is crucial to approach and reveal some of these implicitly and explicitly stated stereotypical roles of females in multicultural children's literature. Through us, parents and teachers might be able to help children and students to wear critical lenses when they read different kinds of stories, and help them to be aware of the many implicit stereotypical issues.

1.3 What is Fantasy?

There has been a debate among many educators regarding the exact explanation of the word fantasy. Allen (2005) claims that defining fantasy is similar to "catching fog in a fishing net". She explains fantasy by relating it to its opposite meaning, which is reality. Yet she adds, "to say that fantasy is unreal is to imply that it does not exist, and clearly it does". She explains, "Its worlds drift in and out of our world, always close by, but often only visible to the imagination. Within it are myths, legends, fables, and folklore" (p. 10). Further, Bettelheim (1976) thinks of fantasy and fairy-tales as "spiritual explorations" that show "human life as seen, or felt, or divined from the inside" (p. 24)

In most of the English edited Cinderella's stories, even though, each is from a different culture such as *Cinderella, The Egyptian Cinderella* and *The Korean Cinderella*, they still share similar characteristics of life livings and circumstances (Botelho& Rudman, 2009). Although most of these fairy tales are imaginative ones, they still imply many of the true universal stereotyped concepts regarding good vs. evil, sadness vs. happiness, ugliness vs. beauty and ethical vs. unethical. Also, the existence of fairy godmother in the Western fairy tales reflects

important information about that culture. Goodwin (2008) states that in Western cultures like Ireland and Scotland, for instance, if a child found to be miserable, he/ she was asked to look for a fairy godmother to help him/her.

Traditionally, it has been widely known that fairy tales have not been written for children. They have been very popular in both public and social gatherings settings, specifically in the times that have witnessed the absence of media. During that time, people used to gather in groups and listen to the teller man whose job is to entertain his audiences saying interesting stories. Zipes (2006) claims, "fairy tale is a polygenetic cultural artifact that has spread throughout the world through human contact" (p. xiv).

More than half a century ago, fairy tales were full of violence and misfortunate events such as killing, revenge, and rape. These type of tales were meant to be for adults only. For instance, Charles Perrault and the German brothers Grimm's *Cinderella* are rich of revenge scenes that Cinderella commits on her stepfamily. One of these bloody scenes describes how Cinderella's two-step sisters cut their toes to fit their foot into Cinderella's slipper to marry the prince. A similar violent scene was in the fairy tale *snow white*. The scene involves a child eating her stepmother. Such scenarios were popular until the eighteenth century when children literature started to emerge as "chap books, religious tracts, educational pamphlets and folk tales" (Goodwin, 2008). Nevertheless, Goodwin (2008) has added that the real "golden age of children's literature" was seen after the "Romantic Movement" in the nineteenth century. At that period of time, series of famous stories have started to be published, for example, *Alice's Adventure in Wonder Land* was published in 1966 and *Peter Pan* was published in 1904 (p. 56).

As one of the important issues of this paper is to explore stereotypes and gender roles, Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin and Stangor (2002) argue in their book *How Children and Adolescents Evaluate Gender and Racial Exclusion* that there might be "times when groups reject individuals for reasons that are wholly external to the social skills or social abilities of the individual being rejected" (p. 3). They have added that these reasons can be classified as gender, ethnicity, race, religion and social class. Further, Rowbotham, a feminist, (1989) argues that women are marginalized from the mode of production; nonetheless men have a value "in the cash nexus, offering their labor for economic reward", while as she specifies that, "The women's role is to reproduce the workforce and service its needs in unpaid capacity" (Sarland, 1991, p. 48).

Many educators consider beauty so gendered stereotypical concept. Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) examined how the normative feminine beauty ideal is maintained in fairy tales. Also, they explored how feminine beauty in the Grimm's fairy tales is emphasized. More importantly, they question why some fairy tales such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White* are survived, while many others are not. Thus, they claim that stories, which heavily emphasize feminine beauty are much more likely to be survived. Furthermore, Bonds-Raake (2006) conducted an empirical research study of the psychological effects of gender stereotypical portrayals in Disney and fairy tales' movies, and she realized that she was stereotyped all her life. A point that needs to be highlighted to avoid such a stereotypical issues in depicted in children literature.

On the other hand, Strayer (1995) examined the enjoyment and the familiarity of fairy tales on forty children and thirty adults who live in North America. Thus, she found out that children love certain genre due to their exposure to it and due to their involvement in imaginative activities. Further, her findings show that "the emotions attributed to the story were similar across child and adult respondents, and similarly affected one's liking for the tale" (p.1). Also, she states that neither gender consistency nor gender stereotypes has significantly affected either males or females liking of the story. Yet, stereotypes consistency influences children's prediction where female-hero would be liked by females and less liked by males.

Nevertheless, gender is still there. It can be seen in the blue colored clothes for a newborn boy and pink for a girl. Also, another element that would force the existence of gender stereotypes notions among children, since kindergarten, is the existence of "a cooking corner for girls and a building-blocks corner for boys" (Biklen& Pollard, 1993, p. 176). Such physical separations concerning activities would reinforce the notion of gender differences and stereotypes among boys and girls.

2. Methodology

In this study, the author has selected three children's picture textbooks that (1) share similar genre, (2) have obedient heroines, (3) have different settings, (4) occur in different cultures, (5) all are fairy tales, and (6) published between 1989 and 2006. This study aims at examining the multicultural associations of gender and beauty depicted in these three texts and the elements of the illustrations among them. Also, the author would like to examine the physical appearance of the heroines of the three stories as it might be so gender based focusing on attractiveness, hair, skin and eye color.

Furthermore, by adopting Botelho and Rudman's (2008) critical multicultural analysis of children's literature approach, the author would like to shed the lights on some of the social and ideological identities of gender that are depicted in the three children textbooks. Taking into considerations (1) critical reading and examination of the illustrations and (2) finding the gender stereotypical conceptions. The following table shows how the three children textbooks are coded in terms of gender role themes. The X sign indicates that this factor, beauty for example, is either implicitly or explicitly depicted in the textbook. Any column that is free of the X sign indicates the absence of that particular factor in that textbook.

Table 1. *Gender stereotypes of Cinderella, the Egyptian Cinderella and the Korean Cinderella*

The Stories' Gender Themes	Cinderella	The Egyptian Cinderella	The Korean Cinderella
Beauty	X	X	
Sex Roles	X	X	
Physical Appearance	X	X	
Passive		X	X
Resistance		X	X
Opportunist		X	X
Gender Discrimination	X	X	X
Class	X	X	X
Race	X	X	
Heroes Handsomeness	X	X	X
Living Happily Ever	X	X	X

After			
Good = Beauty	X	X	X
Evil = Ugliness	X	X	X
Total	10	13	9

2.1.Data Analysis

For the purpose of data collection and analysis, the author relied on book and article reviews, and searched the Internet to know more about the cultural background of the three children textbooks. In analyzing the data, the author adopts Botelho and Rudman's (2009) critical multicultural analysis of children literature approach. Since they encourage readers to "think about the interplay of race, class, gender in books" (p. ix). Moreover, the author used discourse analysis procedure in analyzing the texts of the three textbooks. First, she critically read the textbooks. Then, she started coding the statements that represented gender stereotypes in each of the stories and related each coded text to its matching gender theme as it is shown in the first column of table 1. Furthermore, she considered Zipes' (1986) claim " To talk about fairy tales today, especially feminist fairy tales, one must, in my opinion, talk about power, violence, alienation, social conditions, child-rearing and sex roles" (p. 2). So all of these factors are considered as part of data analysis.

According to Botelho and Ruman (2009), they argue that most Cinderella stories are sharing a similar genre. However, the majority of them differ from each other in small aspects such as the offensive people surrounding the heroines. For instance, in *The Persian Cinderella*, it is her siblings not her stepfamily that are mistreating her and in *The Egyptian Cinderella*, they are the three Egyptian servants. Most of the other heroines are mistreated by their evil stepmother and one or two-stepsisters such as in *The Korean Cinderella* and the western *Cinderella* that is related to Perrault's version.

2.2. Cinderella

Cinderella, the Western,isone of the most famous fairy tales comparing it with Cinderella stories from other ethnics and cultures. *Cinderella* (2005), by Barbara McClintock, tells a story about an obedient innocent girl whose father is a nobleman. She lost her mother at a very young age and her father decided to marry. Her stepmother was cruel and as a result, she was forced to be a servant to an evil stepmother and nasty two stepsisters. Finally, this little poor girl, with the help of her fairy godmother, regained her affluent status and got married to the kingdom's handsome prince after he identified that she is the owner of the little sparkling glass slipper that she lost after she ran away from the ball.

Textual critical analysis of *Cinderella* has revealed that there are many misrepresentations of the social feminine roles in this version of *Cinderella* story. First, it represents stepmother and her daughters as evils and has no mercy. Second, the father is so passive and seems uncaring about his daughter. Third, Cinderella seems to be content with her destiny for being a servant to her stepfamily. Fourth, the power is in magic. It is what every poor girl should look for to help her. Fifth, beauty, grace, luxurious dresses are what attract the attention of a royal man. Sixth, Sexism is implicitly stated in the text of this story. All of these six negative features can be classified under gender role stereotypes.

By examining the stepmother's aggressiveness with her orphan poor stepdaughter and comparing it with the way she kindly treats her daughters, educators should be sensible of the presence of such qualities in children's textbooks. The author did not indicate even a small sign of the stepmother's well being that might give a hope to children, especially those who live with their stepmothers. In this story, the poor Cinderella is experiencing gender and class discrimination from her stepfamily. Also, by examining the sentence "Her stepmother ruled her father with an iron fist, and the poor girl knew he would only scold her if she complained. So she suffered in patient silent", it can be determined that such expressions in children's books would absolutely have negative consequences on children's perception of stepmothers and the way they view real life. Moreover, children who live in similar situations in reality, or those who live with either a stepmother or father might come to their minds that the stepmother might neglect them as it happened to the heroine Cinderella. Even though, that might not be the truth, but this is what their little mind would visualize. Although, many scholars such as Lieberman and Zibes have criticized Cinderella for her passivity, I disagree with them regarding this point. I, personally, see Cinderella as kind and polite more than being completely content and passive. Also, her obedience should be considered strength not weakness. I am sure that she had no choice other than being obedient and servant to her stepfamily. How would she resist them in a society where women are totally dependent on men in their families? Let us all imagine if there is a Cinderella in the twenty first century. I am confident that she would be completely resistant and she might collude with her oppressors, if she only wanted to keep somehow her relationship with them. To emphasize such an attitude, children books writers should be cautious of all their implicit and explicit messages within a textbook.

Moreover, in *Cinderella* story the heroine resisted her stepfamily's orders when she found someone who can help her to make her wish come true. In fact, she went to the ball, danced with the prince with no fear. Further, she invited her stepfamily to taste the oranges that the prince gave her as a gift. Also, "Cinderella smiled a secret smile", when her stepsisters refuted to lend her an old dress to go with them to the ball in the next day. Her smile implies that she will go to the ball without their permission. She will do what her desire tells her to do. In fact, passive people lack this feature. Cinderella, in my opinion, is an absolute opportunist. Furthermore, she dared to ask the prince's valet to try the slipper and more importantly, she confidently showed them her other pair of the shoes. The author views Cinderella's life sequence as lucky, beautiful, unlucky, kind, active, opportunist, and finally lucky.

Figure 1. Cinderella in her rags looks prettier than her sisters in law (McClintock, 2005)

Nevertheless, there is an explicit sign of women gender stereotypes. The woman should look gorgeous, rich and graceful in order to attract a noble man and marry him. McClintock exaggeratingly described Cinderella's beauty, she said, "Despite everything, Cinderella in her rags was still a thousand times more beautiful and dear than her spoiled stepsisters" as Figure 1 shows. The author is cautious that such a statement unquestionably involves racism stereotype. Further, there is no mention of the prince's handsomeness; however, the illustrations clearly show his elegance and attractiveness. Additionally, the sex role is tacitly presented in *Cinderella* story as it can be seen in "Her astounding grace enchanted everyone. By the time dinner was served, the prince was so mitten that he couldn't eat a bite". The author believes this clear occurrence of sex attributes in children's books should be eliminated and both parents and educators should encourage children's storytellers to avoid such uncomfortable topics in children literature. This is in addition to the dilemma that beauty is usually associated with being the good and ugliness is associated with being the evil. The association among these attributes should be resolved by eliminating such negative social stereotypes from children's textbooks.

2.3.The Egyptian Cinderella

The Egyptian Cinderella (1989), Rhodopis, was brought to life by Shirley Climo and in order to fit Cinderella's genre, she inserted "as an element of the plot her mistreatment by the women of the Egyptian court" (Botelho& Rudman, 2009, p.226). This tale is a quiet different from *Cinderella*, yet, it still maintains much of the same plot. The story is about Rhodopis, a Greek slave, who was kidnaped by pirates from her home country Greece and sold as a slave in Egypt. She was a friend to the animals and danced for them. One time, her master saw her dancing, so he felt so impressed that he designed a pair of slippers gilded in rose-red gold for her. Three girls, who were the household servants, but not slaves like Rhodopis, mistreated her. When they went to the pharaoh's feast, Rhodopis was left behind to do the washing. The only thing that Rhodopis had was her rose-red gold slipper. In the festival day a falcon snatched the slipper away and threw it into the great Pharaoh's lap. He assumed, " The god Horus sends me a sign" (Climo, 1989, unpaged), and then he started himself searching for the owner of this slipper to be his own pride. Finally, he found the Greek Rharados and got married to her. Unlike many other fairy tales where the hero depends on a magical being to be rescued, in *The Egyptian Cinderella,* Rharados was rescued by a falcon, a natural being, which snatched her slipper and threw it to the Pharaoh as a sign to find his queen. So he decided that the one that this slipper fits her foot would be his queen.

In an explanation of some fairy tale creatures, Mackenzie (1924) states, "there are several forms of Horus. The most familiar is the hawk, which symbolized the spirit of the sun. It protected the early kings". Mackenzie adds, "the cult of Horus absorbed the Egyptian beliefs, and the conception of the hawk god varied accordingly in different districts" (p. 163). This quotation explains why the Egyptian Cinderella was different form all the other Cinderellas. In this Cinderella version, a myth has played an important role in saving this girl. This reflects the belief of the Egyptians in a past period of time. Goodwin (2008) argues, "Myths were first invented to explain the world's mysteries and reflect a human need to explain how things came to be. As part of desire to explain natural phenomena...People have invented a whole variety of gods and supernatural beings" (p. 44).

*Figure 2.*Rhodopis and the Egyptian servants (Climo, 1989)

In *The Egyptian Cinderella*, race depiction can be obviously seen from the first glance in the illustrations of this story. The illustrator, as Figure 2 shows, represented the three Egyptian servants with shadowy brown skin and straight hair, while Rhodopis, the Greek slave, was represented with bright red skin, green eyes and golden hair. Some would claim that this might be the factual sketch for these women. In my opinion, it would be more reasonable and neutral, if, at least, they are not positioned in the same page for comparison. Likewise, the body language of this story is full of racialism and beauty preferences of one type of womenfolk, in terms of race, over the other. That can be seen in "Their eyes were brown and hers were green. Their hair hung straight to their shoulders, while the breeze blew hers into tangles. Their skin glowed like copper, but her pale skin burned red beneath the sun" (Climo, 1989, unpaged).

Furthermore, Rhodopis experienced class and gender discrimination from the three Egyptian household servants, and that is because she was only a slave and prettier than them. Rhodopis has experienced class discrimination that was shown when the servants tried to persuade pharaoh not to marry Rhodopis by saying "But Rhodopis is a slave". The heroine seemed to be completely obedient and passive. She colluded with her oppressors who treated her badly until the pharaoh rescued her. Unlike, Cinderella, Rhodopis did not show any sort of resistance. Additionally, gender stereotypes can be easily traced. For instance, the heroine should be obedient, white, blond, has colored eyes, patient, graceful, and knows how to dance. These stereotypical features are only what made Rhodopis a perfect pride for a prince or a pharaoh. Further, the illustration showed the pharaoh with athletes' physical ability and appearance. Such

misleading characteristics can influence the children thoughts about how an ideal lady should look like and act to win a noble man. Also, the indication that a woman can find her independence and contentment only through the assistance of a male whether he was a prince, pharaoh or nobleman, has the foremost gender stereotype. Likewise, the idea that the male is the rescuer and the one who has the power and money is completely a gender based stereotype and educators should eliminate such images from children literatures.

2.4.The Korean Cinderella

In the Korean Cinderella, (1993), by Shirley Climo, the heroine is Pear Blossom. She is a lovely girl who lost her mother and her father got married to another woman. Her nasty jealous stepmother and stepsister mistreated her. They kept forcing her to complete some chores that would not be done without the help of magical beings' assistances, such as frogs, sparrows and oxen. They did not want to allow her to attend the festival. However, with the help of these magical creatures, Pear Blossom was able to enjoy the festival, but she lost her sandal in the stream. A nobleman fished her sandal and decided to find the owner of this lucky sandal and marry her. In this story, the magical creatures were the support that was provided to Pear Blossom every time she needed assistant. Because of their help she was able to attend the festival where in her way, Pear Blossom met the noble man. He liked her and decided to find her via the artifact, which is her shoe.

*Figure 3.*Pear Blossom and the black ox (Climo, 1993)

The illustrations of the story are very descriptive. First, the sparrows are very popular and common in Korea, especially before the air pollution. They are vey much considered friendly to nature. Second, cows and oxen are very useful and friendly animals. Many of the Koreans were farmers and they depended on agriculture to survive, so cows and oxen were usually nearby them in their fields. However, it is uncommon to find a black cow in Korea, as it is shown in the illustration. In fact, most of the oxen if it is not all of them are brown, see Figure 3 for as an illustration. Third, there is a common friendly cultural attitude toward the frogs. Most of the

Korean children were used to play with them especially in rainy days. It is more probably that the author chose these three animals because of their cultural association to the Koreans.

Unlike Cinderella and the Egyptian Cinderella, beauty was not very much emphasized in the Korean Cinderella. There is a slight reference of it when the noble man met the heroine in his way to the festival. Yet, according to the Korean culture feminine beauty can be seen in the female's obedient, submissiveness and kindness...etc. Physical attractiveness was not the first goal for men to look for their prides. For instance, if a female used to wear very colorful clothing, she would not have the same respect as the one who dresses light colors and simple clothes. In fact, this is what the illustrations focused on. They showed Pear Blossom with light colors such as yellow, green and blue. On the contrary, her stepsister and stepmother wore dark red and pink clothes. Further, the meaning of the names of both sisters carries another strong message. For example, both of the sisters carry flowers names such as the white Pear Blossom and the pink Peony. Pear Blossom or "Ewha" means very clean and white while Peony means Fantasy and lovely flower. This supports the idea that the good lady is the one who is patient, neat, docile and active (i.e., good house wife). Pear Blossom was beautiful with good manners and skills. She was better than her stepsister in doing the household chores. Because of these traits, she experienced gender and class discriminations from her stepfamily. They were so jealous of Pear Blossom. They used to ask her do household chores that would never end without the help of the natural and magical beings.

Similarly to the previously examined Cinderellas, the handsomeness of the nobleman was not explicitly stated throughout the texts; however, it can be easily noticed in the illustrations. The noble man in The Korean Cinderella has the advantages of handsomeness and physical attractiveness. Subsequently, this story emphasizes the stereotype of men's physical abilities, richness and the misconception of being the females' sole rescuer and liberator. Even though, the noble man seemed to be married, which can be inferred from his hairstyle in the illustrations, he was shown as the guarantee for Pear Blossom's future happiness. In fact, the Korean culture only married men style their hair this way.

Moreover, this story emphasizes the stereotypical idea of living happily ever after and that can be seen in the picture of the two mandarin ducks. According to the Korean culture, Koreans use a couple of beautiful and colorful mandarin ducks in wedding ceremony as a sign for living happily ever after. Finally, the gender stereotype of being evil associated with ugliness is also emphasized.

3.Findings

Through the analysis of these three fairy tales, and by considering Table 1, it can be concluded that the main emphasis is on the importance of beauty and physical appearance. Further, beauty and attractiveness is usually rewarded. Thus, beauty measurements mean that the heroine should be white, blond, sexy, and fair with colored eyes. Yet, in the past Korean culture, beauty was represented in being kind, nice and obedient…etc. Therefore, owing to these heroines' gorgeousness and beauty, their gentlemen chose them as their brides; so as a consequence such fairy tales, also, propagate the stereotypical conviction of living happily ever after. Nevertheless, nothing was mentioned regarding the men's handsomeness. Yet, men's Physical ability and attractiveness are significantly exhibited in the illustrations of the three tales.

Further, these fairy tales convey the stereotypical messages that beauty is somehow associated with being good, yet ugliness is associated with being evil. For instance, the images of the lovely heroines in theses tales are limited of being obedient, dependent, passive, victim, week and content most of the times. On the other hand, the ugly servants in *TheEgyptian Cinderella* and the stepfamilies as in the other two stories are shown in a linear line as dominant, wicked, evil, tough, mean and jealous characters. Even though, I have examined three stories with different characters, settings and culture, they are still sharing a similar genre and differing only in the number of stepsisters; for instance, in *The Egyptian Cinderella* there is no existence of the stepfamily. However, all of the heroines were preys to the wicked females who lived with them. So these females mistreated the heroines and forced them to live in bad conditions while the oppressors lived in better ones. Thus, the analysis of these tales reveals the stereotypical misconception of having a clear-cut division of how females can be. In fact, in these stories they look either so kind to the maximum that the heroine would be troubled and oppressed or evil to appear tremendously cruel and unmerciful.

Moreover, both of Cinderella and The Korean Cinderella categorized stepfamily in general and stepmother in specific as shameful, cruel and nasty and they totally lack beauty and compassion. Ella (1993) supports this claim, saying that "Most simply and clearly [the fairy-tale] tells the story of women in our culture, and simply states that they must be either innocent and beautiful, so passive that they are almost dead, or profoundly and monstrously evil: good mother, bad mother". Possibly, this may ruin the reputation of motherhood and can increase children's fear of mother lose. To sum up, Figure 1, displays the differences of gender stereotypes among the three investigated tales. It shows that the Egyptian Cinderella has the highest gender stereotypes, as are explicitly and implicitly depicted in the texts and the illustrations, following it Cinderella, then The Korean Cinderella which has the least gender stereotypes comparing it with the others.

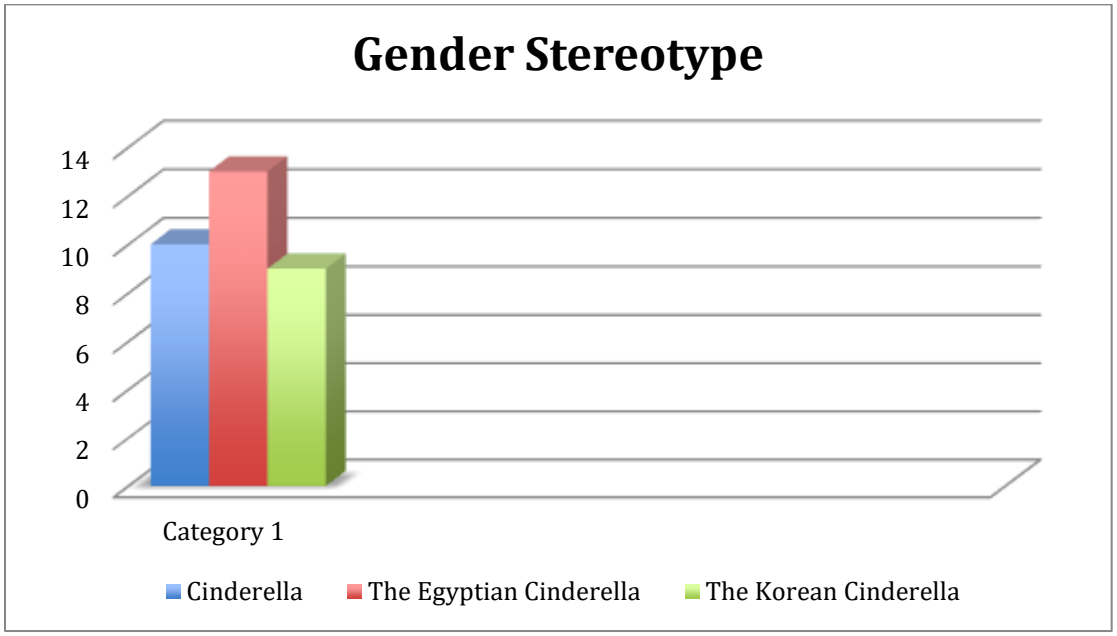

Figure 1. Shows the gender stereotypes' levels among Cinderella, The Egyptian Cinderella and the Korean Cinderella children books.

4. Conclusion

By considering the analysis of the three examined Cinderella fairy tales, it can be concluded, that even though, females are the primary characters of the three stories, still gender stereotypical misrepresentation of females are explicitly and implicitly presented. Furthermore, gender differences and the underestimation of females are historically rooted in many of children and young adults' literature books. Unfortunately, females are portrayed in many children's picture textbooks as passive, content, obedient, submissive, week, dependent and evil. Also, these stories emphasized fundamental conventional fallacies such as good is associated with being beautiful and evil is associated with being ugly. Consequently, this would negatively influence the creation and the maturity of the children's attitudes and values. Thus, this would reflect on their view of the real life.

5. Limitations of the Study

As this research is based on analyzing a limited number of Cinderella fairy tales, it is worthy to indicate that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all the other fairy tales by considering them so gendered stereotypical stories without examining each book separately. Therefore, for future research, researchers need to investigate extra fairy tales that might in addition to *Cinderella*, include other famous stories such as *Snow White, Sleeping beauty* and many other fantasy fairy tales. Further, the analysis of the stories is based on retold versions of the tales and not on the original ones that are not meant to be for children. Also, the lack of adequate cultural knowledge of the examined stories can be regarded as one of this study's limitations.

6. Implications and Recommendation

According to the findings of this study, teachers, instructors and educators should first practice critical analysis and be cautious with the hidden messages such as ideologies, race, class and gender in children books, in addition to the sociopolitical and sociocultural identities of every selected children's reading book. Thus, teachers should encourage children and young readers to critically think of gender roles depicted in their readings and they should not ignore the children's notices without logical clarifications and comments, in order to reinforce their positive understanding of gender as a social construction. Further, the parents' influential roles over their children in introducing them to the many values of gender differences between both sexes cannot be ignored. For instance, Fisher and Silber maintained, "feminist psychological studies have documented thoroughly the importance of a mother's positive role in her daughter's gender identity" (2000, p. 125).

Furthermore, young readers should be taught that gender roles are sometimes a production of cultural inequality and discrimination and they do not always reflect our own societies' perceptions of masculine and feminine gender stereotypical roles (Sperry & Grauerholz, 2003, p.723). Also, teachers and educators should less emphasize the significance of feminine beauty and physical appearance. Instead, they need to focus on the females' independent personality, education, resourcefulness, creativity, thoughts and many other different positive contributions. It is strongly recommended that instructors have to collaborate

with the novelists and publishers of children and young adults' books. Also, teachers' preparation workshops are needed to update and enhance the teachers' understandings of the different literature stereotypes and the new schemes employed in choosing children's textbooks.

More significantly, instructors should teach and show children and young adults how to appreciate females and encourage them not to underestimate them in any either way. Thus, in order to achieve such goals, the sociologist Davis (1983, p. 39), argued against the underestimation of women in literature and claimed that it is the time " to move on from the frequent portrayal of the female as subordinate and oppressed, towards a demonstration of the creative possibilities in female resistance". Further, writers of children textbooks should free their writings from the so gendered descriptions and details.

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